

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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***For Immediate Release***

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***February 18, 2005***

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that **AARON WERNLE**, age 23, of Troy, Illinois, pled guilty today in Federal District Court in East St. Louis, Illinois for the felony offense of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm, in violation of Title 26, United States Code, Section 5861(d). The maximum penalty that can be imposed is not more than 10 years' incarceration, not more than a \$250,000 fine, and up to 3 years' supervised release. Sentencing is set for June 23, 2005, at 9:30 a.m.

On June 24, 2004, **WERNLE** was arrested by the Troy, Illinois Police Department in possession of the unregistered firearm, more specifically described as an improvised destructive device, a homemade bomb.

The investigation in this case was a cooperative effort of the Madison County State's Attorney's Office, the Troy, Illinois Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, pursuant to these agencies' participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and is directed at removing guns and drugs from our communities. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Richard H. Lloyd.